# So, You Need to Measure Behavior Change? Progress in the Food Stamp Nutrition Evaluation Project



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### ERS Role in Food Stamp Nutrition Education Evaluation

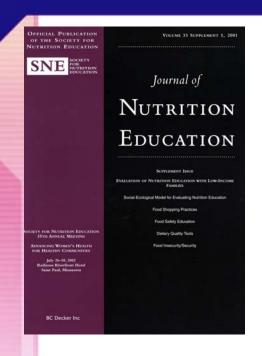
### Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP)

- Initiated in 1998
- Intramural and extramural research
- Congressional appropriation for extramural studies and evaluations of food assistance programs
- Since 1999 funds shared with FNS
- Current funding level \$5 million





### Where We've Been: FSNE Evaluation Activities To Date



Journal of Nutrition Education Supplement

Evaluation of Nutrition Education With Low-Income Families

Articles also online at www.ers.usda.gov





#### Development of Collaborative Partnerships

- Interagency Working Group on FSNE Evaluation - FNS, CSREES, ERS
- Grant to Society for Nutrition Education for Post-Conference Workshop in July, 2003
- Continuous collaboration during all phases of measure development





#### January 2003 FSNE Workshop

Small group format, bringing in representatives of Interagency Task Force, SNE, other members of Federal and State agencies and the Research community. Its charge:

Identifying Research Needs to Support Program Evaluation





#### Results of January FSNE Workshop

- Further Defining Outcomes
- Developing Information Systems to Support Research and Evaluation
- Developing Meaningful Process Measures
- Devising Strategies for Improving Collaborative Efforts in Research and Evaluation
- Maintaining Ongoing Dialog and Evaluation Research Process





#### July 2003 FSNE Workshop

- Outcome Measures for Nutrition
   Education with Low-Income Audiences
- Automated Web-based Data Collection Systems
- How Program Reporting Systems Can Support Evaluation
- Linking Process Strategies and Outcomes





#### July 2003 Workshop Follow Up

- Commissioned review of available measures of dietary behavior
- Mathematica developed prototype notebook of questions
- Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior papers outlining evaluation and development of dietary behavior measures (forthcoming)



#### April 2004 FSNE Workshop

- Expert panel identified candidate questions for further testing from Prototype Notebook
- Participants suggested additional questions to cover gaps in existing questions or topic areas not addressed



#### April 2004 Workshop Follow Up

- Candidate questions needed refinement
- Drawn from variety of instruments
- Different reference periods
- Different response categories
- Developed before the 2005 Dietary Guidelines



# Development of a Cognitive Testing Protocol

- FSNE workshop committee reviewed questions to implement cognitive testing
- ERS developed contract with Abt to:
  - Revise questions for cognitive testing
  - Develop protocol with standardized probes, training manual and video
  - Protocol and training materials posted on ERS Extranet



# Next Step: Development of a Short Measure of Dietary Behavior

- Contract with Mathematica just signed
- ERS and FNS jointly funding contract
- Key activities:
  - Content review of protocol
  - Cognitive testing
  - Field testing



#### Short Dietary Behavior Measure

- Short set of questions consisting of:
  - Core questions
  - Modules addressing specific topics
  - Capable of administration by telephone, oneon-one, paper and pencil, electronic means
  - Question length no more than 15 minutes



## Long Term Plan for Dietary Measure

- Validate short questionnaire against established measures of dietary quality
- Work with FNS to incorporate questions into upcoming Food Stamp survey
- Validation possibilities include HEI or repeated 24-hour recalls with appropriate audience
- Final measure suitable for national, state, regional and local use in evaluation



## For Continuing Information, FSNE Webpage

- ERS-FANRP currently has a Food Stamp Program Briefing Room
- FSNE research and evaluation efforts and information now a chapter within Food Stamp Briefing Room
- Interactive data resource
- Featuring links to ERS data and other relevant Federal data sources



